2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

776 and we are quick to sacrifice to them. We give them fowls twice every year, at rice
782 planting and harvesting. When we sacrifice to them, there is no magic square, there is no sindur either, nor is there any religious abstinence, and the invocation is only a few words; we say to them: Beware then, so and so's Boundary bonga, look here, I am giving thee, handing thee in the name of harvesting (or planting); may there be no sudden fear, no sudden alarm. Except women all eat the sacrifice. People say, it is told, that if only you of the family eat, or if you take anything home, then the boundary bongas will enter the house and exterminate the whole family of that house.

177 These are our real annual festivals and offerings. On the last day of the month of
776 Aghăr we have a kind of festival, called sahar lupḍal[31]; we press cakes and eat them; but we make no sacrifices. From the Dekos we have from time to time taken over many festivals; but among these there is only one festival that we, the whole village celebrate, viz., the Karam[32]. At that time we offer balaṅja flowers[33], sun-dried paddy, dhubi grass, oil, and sindur to Karmu and Dharmu, and on the karam branch we put, as a screen, a piece of cloth two cubits long. At other festivals taken from the Dekos only the man who celebrates it, worships, and we go to look at it; we do not worship. At the Durga festival such people offer to Durga, at the Kali festival they offer to Kali, at the Monsa festival they offer to Monsa, at the Chata festival they offer to the Chata bonga, at the Pata festival they offer to Mahadeb, and at the Jatra festival they offer to Ranṣiṅ, the Jatra bonga. But as these festivals do not belong to us, Santals do not act rightly offering to the bongas of other races. On account of this our bongas are angry with us; it becomes like the state of having a wife and a co-wife, we are not making anybody satisfied. We have got much confusion in connexion with the bongas. You Europeans have only one bonga; you are very fortunate, because you worship the Thakur, who has made us.

776 To the Jom sim we do not sacrifice every year, only now and then. To the Siṅ (sun or
782 day) bonga we offer one goat, and to the Jom sim bonga we offer one goat or a ram on that occasion. The invocation is not different; only at the end we say to the Siṅ bonga: We are not able to do this every year, do not therefore take offence, be displeased.

776 Our ancestors of old have left us a word, viz.: Once in your life, somehow or other, do
• 753 sacrifice to the Siṅ bonga, even when you are poor, and when you have the means, do sacrifice to him every fifth or sixth year, otherwise he will not call you good in the next world. In the primeval age they were offering only to the Siṅ bonga; the Jom sim bonga they have added afterwards. Since we have got venereal disease from the Dekos, we make vows to the Siṅ bonga to be cured from it; this they call "pair offering". They say, it

[31] The meaning of this expression is uncertain; sahar is regularly used about dung, especially cow-dung, and lupḍa (or lupḍal) about rubbing, plastering with cow-dung. One might therefore be tempted to take it as meaning renovation after the ravages of the rainy season. [32] See Dictionary s. v. [33] Cassia auriculata, Roxb.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

is told, that Sita made a vow to get a venereal disease when Rabon carried her away to the Lonka (Ceylon) fortress. At that time, it is told, the Siṅ bonga caused Sita to get a venereal disease, because she made a vow to him; thereby Sita's honour remained unviolated.

The Maḱ Mọ̄rẹ̄ sacrifice occurs only now and then, when all the people of a village make a vow on account of some great calamity. And when a rumour comes from the country that the Mọ̄rẹ̄ko Turuiko have become sulky, then also they have a Maḱ Mọ̄rẹ̄ sacrifice. They sacrifice goats and fowls to all the bongas of the village. Except the wife of the village priest no woman gets cooked rice with curry of the flesh of the sacrificed animals and birds; all the men get it. They perform the Maḱ Mọ̄rẹ̄ sacrifice in the sacred grove. The young men and girls dance the whole night, singing Flower-festival songs.

The Kuṭạm ḍaṅgra (ox felling) sacrifice is only one man's business; but all the village people eat the flesh and cooked rice. The man who celebrates this fells one ox in the name of the ancestors; he beheads one ox in the name of the house bonga, and also in the name of Maraṅ buru he beheads one ox. The ox that is felled he fells at the foot of an atnaḱ tree, after first having made it eat from rice on a leaf-plate; and the two other bullocks he makes eat from small heaps of rice, after having made a magic square with flour at the foot of a Sal tree; thereupon he beheads them.

The Kuṭạm ḍaṅgra sacrifice is performed when they have the Jọm sim, or some vow has been made. Since we have come under the feet of the Dekos, we have the Kuṭạm ḍaṅgra sacrifice at night, because the Deko landowners impose heavy fines if they get to know of it[34]. The meat of the ox that is sacrificed in the name of the house bonga, that is to say, the meat of the side on which it falls down, and the head, only the people of the family eat, otherwise the people of the whole village all eat. The village headman and his deputy and the Goḍet get one thigh, viz., of the felled ox as their share. The Paranik gets the part of the thigh highest up, the headman gets the middle and the Goḍet the lower part. They take out a neck part for the village council. This they call the neck part of the girls. Outside in the field they eat a hash made only of the head and the liver and lungs. The meat the people of the different houses make into equal portions and take home; the whole family eat it.

[34] The landlords being Hindus object to bullocks and especially cows being killed.

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household, and thereafter, at the junction of two roads. Human blood can only be offered at the latter place.

Amongst lesser Boṅgas under this head, mention should be made of Acraeli Boṅga (or Jodhe Boṅga as in Mayurbhanj), who presides over the interests of married women. We were told that if a woman steals anything from her parents' home, and takes it to her husband's place, this godling maintains a close watch over the stolen properties and punishes the household by bringing illness and even death. The tenacity of this deity is almost leech-like, and to make him return to his own domain involves costly offerings.

The *Bagbut Boṅga* or tiger spirit is worshipped during the annual winter Harvest Home at Mayurbhanj, in order that tigers may not kill the cattle of the Santals. During the hypnotic trance (*Jhupar*) that precedes the sacrifice to the deity, the person possessed does not cut off the head of the fowl with a knife, but springs tiger-like on the fowl and tears it off with his teeth.

Some Boṅgas of this description take the form of young men and women for the purpose of meeting with Santals of the opposite sex. The result of such unions invariably lead to illness; and the attentions of the Boṅga-lovers can be prevented by elaborate magic and charms by Witch Doctors.

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754 their baleful influence. Similarly, some men are
[822] supposed to possess "evil shadows," so much so, that even if snakes fall within their ambit, they cannot move an inch. When a child vomits, has
• [753] bowel complaints or fever, or cries unnecessarily, it is the evil eye that is thought to be responsible for
[822] the malady. Let a man's evil shadow fall on rice-
[823] beer, lo and behold! it does no more ferment.

789 To prevent these, Santal children are made to
754 wear amulets of parasites on *Bhela* trees. Incantations are also uttered over some mustard seeds, a few grains of which are wrapped up in a piece of cloth and worn as a charm held by a string round the loins or the neck. In serious cases, the *Ojha*
[756] (exorcist) is summoned when he chants incantations and removes the spell.

Magical charms to counteract spells are learnt by many Santals, for, who knows that 'evil eyes' may not lead them to embarrassing situations at village dances, when they may find their wearing cloth being stolen away by invisible hands? And
[756] in ceremonies like marriages, the services of an exorcist are sometimes requisitioned to patrol over women with evil eyes or men with evil shadows.

Apart from these, there are various other beliefs regarding the capacity of certain men to cast magical
[518] spells. Thus if an inimical person buries anything near a Santal's house, it is thought that an injury is intended.

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III

(a) Raranic or Herb-Doctor.

In his individual ailments the Santal recognises the disease to be due to either of the three causes as mentioned by Dr. Clements,[1] such as :

1. Natural causes,
2. Human agencies,
3. Supernatural agencies,

Naturally different functionaries are called upon to remedy the different items.

The man called upon to treat the diseases due to natural cause is the Raranic who comes nearest to our modern practising physician. He is a master of many herbs and simples. Like the modern physician he has faith in his drugs and herbs and looks askance on the practices of the spirit doctor or Ojha and his hocus-pocus. He learns his trade as an apprentice to an old practising Raranic who jealously guards the secrets of his herbs and prescriptions. They say that their knowledge is derived mostly by observation of animals attacked with disease and the way these cure themselves. He follows the diseased animal in the jungle and marks the herbs or roots From the encyclopaedic list of prescriptions collected by Rev. P.O. Bodding and Mrs. Bodding, M.B., one would infer that the Santal medical treatment has not been entirely conservative. There are indeed several items which could be taken as survival of primitive prescriptions such as the use of animal refuse or insect preparation, reminding us of the cauldron of Macbeth's witches.

[1]Forrest E. Clement's Primitive Concepts of Disease. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, p. 186, Volume 32, No. 2, pp. 185, 252, year 1932.

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174 witches. But the majority comprises of herbs and sometimes also minerals, leading one to suspect strongly the influence of Hindu indigeneous Kaviraji treatment which had been universally adopted (ancient Hindu medicinal treatises having been translated into Arabic and passed through it into mediaeval European pharmacopoeia). Thus for instance the use of Rasa-Sindur is distinctly Hindu, the word Rasa being the old Hindu word for a form of preparation of mercury. Similarly, some names such as Kababchini or tobacco-water show post-Mahomedan adoption.

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824 It may be mentioned here that there is a seasonal ceremonial called Ranjagao for the vitalising or blessing of medicinal plants in general, at the time of the autumnal Dasai parab. This has no reference to any special ingredients but increases the effectiveness of medicine in general. There are certain instructions given as to the time and mode.

757 The method of diagnosis, generally followed, is by feeling the pulse as amongst the Hindu Kavirajes.

[759] (b) **Tejo Theory**

• 753 The Santal calls in the Rarantic for diseases due to natural causes. But he also has a theory of disease which in his scientific viewpoint is as natural a cause as infection caused by bacteria. But we can look upon it as an agency which is natural and yet supernatural and sometimes also diffused with human agency. According to them diseases would be caused by a tejo which may be large or very miscroscopic. These tejos are located in different parts of the body, some at the root of the nose and some in different parts of the body.

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Rev. Bodding gives a detailed description of this theory,[1] where he describes how there is a belief of tejo causing leprosy or hydrophobia, etc., how these tejos enter the body through food etc. The tejo germs are often believed to be collected by witches for spreading disease amongst people. In the first place naturally the herbalist tries his drugs but this failing the witch-doctor is called.

The Tejo theory of disease falls in line with what Dr. Clements[2] calls disease-object intrusion. Dr. Clements in his study has apparently left out (at least he has not specifically mentioned) the important pre-Dravidian tribes of Chota-Nagpur such as Santals, Hos, Mundas, etc., and thus in his distribution map No. 2 this portion of India is not shaded as it ought to have been. He has shown this idea to be almost universal in the New World and extended up to Siberia Another area is shown in South-Eastern Asia and the Santal under consideration would show a continuous distribution of this from Chota-Nagpur to the Pacific area. Other centres in Europe, Western Asia and Africa are recorded as being capable of tentative connections with the area of the Santal and South-Eastern Asia. The tejo concept of the Santal is identical with the disease-object intrusion concept in other areas. According to Dr. Clements (to whom the Santal area is unknown) "the criterion is the actual presence in the body of a tangible, supposedly pathogenic substance. Now although the exact nature of this substance varies considerably, such

[1] Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal Disease and connected Folklore, Part I, pp. 6-8 Memoirs of the A.S.B., Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 1-132.

[2] Dr. Clements, op. cit., p. 209.

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753 171 variation is quite haphazard. That is to say, there is no regional differentiation, the most common intruders being small pebbles, bits of leather, sticks, little bones, hairs, coagulated blood, insects, and even small animals.[1]" The idea of dental diseases due to worms in the teeth is not only known in the Santal area but is common in Bengal and perhaps other parts of India, and is treated in India generally by wandering gypsies called 'Bedia' who might have been a distributing agency of this idea in other parts of the Old World. The distribution of the disease-object intrusion concepts in South-Eastern Asia, and perhaps in Western Asia also, may be centered in India if we take the whole as a continuous area of which information has not been collected from some parts of Persia. The old Hindu theory of fever (Jvara) is that it is brought about by a intruding disease-demon (Jvarasur) which finds its way into the body of the afflicted through a disease-object. Could it be suggested that the disease-object intrusion idea was taken up by the Hindu from an earlier surviving primitive concept and incorporated into the systematised medical treatment through which it diffused to Western Asia on the one hand and Indonesia on the other? More knowledge of Chinese and Indian mutual influences on the medical systems of both countries might bridge the gulf between the areas of South-Eastern Asia and Ainu-Sibero-American zone.

753 (c) **Spirit Intrusion and Witchery.**

There is strong belief almost universal amongst the Santals that disease is also caused by the presence in the body of a malevolent bonga, i.e., evil spirits, ghost or demon.

[1] Dr. F.E. Clements, op. cit., p. 211.

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ghost or demon. Dr. Clements has drawn rightly a distinction between a spirit intrusion and spirit possession.[1] Amongst the Santals the most respected person would be the Ojha who would work for good, being 'possessed' by a spirit. Whereas all the evils and sorceries are due in their belief to the intrusion of the bongas, often worked to that effect by that most hated and feared human set, the dains or witches. It is further curious to observe how the concepts of sorcery, breach of taboo, and bonga-intrusion have become closely interwoven with each other in Santal thought. The spirit or bonga-intrusion is generally aided by the human agency of the sorceress—but the witch of the intruding malevolent bonga would be powerless to offend unless the victim had committed some breach of taboo. The witch-doctor who is called in aid of the diseased, first of all enquiries carefully about the conduct of the patient so as to find out the nature of the breach of the taboo which has enabled the evil bonga to intrude and then with the help of expiatory rites and superior spirit-aid he drives away the intruding evil bonga.

Spirit intrusion, according to Dr. Clements, is probably considerably later than disease-object intrusion and had undergone considerable diffusion before the full Neolithic period of Western Asia. Clements has further shown that belief in disease causing sorcery is distributed to the ends of the earth. It is of almost universal occurrence in the Old World and extends from the north to the south even in the New World. The basic idea has been suggested to be possibly due to the "Elementargedanken" of Bastian.

[1] Dr. Clements, op. cit., pp. 316-323.

2 [Erratum: this should read "enquires." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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755 the same finger on the earth. The *ojha* then takes a sal leaf and looks intensely over it and then takes an-
755 other look over it in the similar way. A sal leaf has a
824 number of veins which divide the surface into several compartments. In different places on the surface of a leaf the *ojha* drops oil with the index or middle finger of the right hand uttering at the same time what each oil mark is to stand for, viz., the supposed possible cause or origin of the patient's disease. The Santals
[753] believe that one of the following causes brings disease,
[761] death and misery:

(1) Natural causes,
(2) Human beings,
(3) *Bongas*, and
(4) The spirits of ancestors.

The *ojha* in the above way puts marks here and there on the leaf, at the same time muttering to himself that this is for such and that for such, and a third for something else, and so on, whereupon he commences to rub each mark in with his finger. Whilst rubbing, the *ojha* mutters some *Mantras*. The Santal *ojha* uses different names for oils and leaves in the *Mantra*; if the particular kind used is not mentioned in the *Mantra* the magic would be spoilt.

755 **"Tarik" or Detection of Disease by Sirom Broom**: The Santal *Ojha* draws a number of squares side by side on the earth with a twig or handle of a Sirom broom. At first three long lines are drawn parallel to one another on the ground and then a number of short lines are drawn across the above three lines, thus getting a figure with the help of a number of squares. The *ojha* then

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night before the men start for the annual tribal hunt with utterly obscene songs and practices.

5. The fifth class of spirits are the village deities, which are the following :

1. Jaher Era (female). 2. Gosain Era (female).
3. Truko Muruko (male). 4. Marang Buru (male).
5. Parganat (male).

The Santals worship the above deities periodically in the sacred grove.

6. There are spirits of the village boundary known as *Sima bongas*, and of the outskirt of the village known as *Bahre bongas*.

7. Next come tramp or stray spirits who are spirits of persons and children dying an unnatural death.

8. The spirit of the father-in-law's household, as is believed, sometime follows the bride to her new house which is known as *Naihar bonga*. As soon as a Santal is convinced that the *Naihar bonga* has come along he will either make yearly sacrifices to him, or, as there is some risk connected with it as one does not know the requirements of the foreign *bonga*, he will make arrangements to send him back at once, for by himself he will not return. If either is not done the consequences are disease and death in the house.

Another spirit that must be exercised[1] is *Kisar bonga*. The *Kisar bonga* is of a rather uncertain character. A man who has got such a *bonga* into his house will be wealthy through him as he steals from others and carries all to the house of his master, but if he is offended there is no end to the mischief he will make. If on his account disease is brought into a

1 [Erratum: this should read "exorcised." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

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family, the whole of it will be exterminated if the *Kiser bonga* is not effectually sent away from the house.

9. The last to be grouped are the spirits or rather mysterious powers residing in or connected with certain objects such as battle-axe (*Kapi Karan bonga* and *Bhalua Bijai bonga*. *Bhalu* is most likely a shortened form of *Bhalua Kapi*, the name of a common form of their battle-axe), and some weird natural objects such as an abnormally gnarled bamboo-shoot, tree-roots, some weird-looking fantastic-shaped hills or a roaring cataract, a waterfall or a tank-side. These spirits are not objects of worship nor do they receive sacrifices but are mischievous spirits who have to be scared away or exorcised by the *ojha* (spirit-doctor).

Santal religious ceremonies :

The Santals have no temple nor any shed for worship but they have a *Sthan* (place) known as *Jahirsthan* where they worship the village deities. The *Jahirsthan* is a place where religious ceremonies of the village are performed by the Santals. It is situated at the end of the village and it must be within the boundary of the village. It should consist of trees belonging to the primeval forest. A cluster of sal trees about twenty to twenty-five in number, is always required. Among these trees three are essential and they must stand in a row. At the base of each of these three trees a small stone is placed representing the deities *Jaherwa*, *Turko Muruko*, *Marang-Buru*. The fourth is an Ashan tree which grows anywhere near those three sal trees, and a stone is put on its base representing the diety *Pargana Bonga*. The fifth and

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wait for men. Women are protected from the designs of these ghosts by the iron bangle which they wear.

Ghosts of the dead and other private spirits who are given the title of *boiga* form part of the stock-in-trade of the two classes of people among the Santals who deal regularly with the occult- the magicians and the witches. They are bitterly opposed to each other's influence, and they clash for the most part on the battleground of sickness and disease. An exhaustive treatise on the Santal attitude to disease has been published, and shows conclusively that, as with ghosts so with sickness, the ideas of the Santals are common to all the lower strata of society in North India.[1] These ideas are not simple but complex, and range from the realm of the rational to the fantastic. Disease is sometimes ascribed to natural causes, particularly when the chain of causation is fairly obvious and can be repeated in a series of experiments; there is a whole class of food described as *batol*, which means that it is unwholesome. There are hundreds of remedies that require no supernatural aid to make them effective. Some remedies are the property of all, while others are the property of individuals and the knowledge of their ingredients is a closely guarded secret. Chaitan of Churimara began his career as a physician in response to a specific need. When he was a young man a friend had come to him in great distress and said that his boy was vomiting blood. He turned to Chaitan and asked him if he knew of any medicine that would be good for the boy. Chaitan was so sorry for his friend that he promised to do something, although when he said this he had no notion what he should do. As he was setting out for his friend's house he prayed to *Cando* and asked that he might be shown what he ought to do; at the same time he shut his eyes and kicked at the soil. As he opened his eyes again he saw a plant, which he immediately dug up. He ground the roots to make a medicine, and the boy recovered from his sickness. Since then he has applied the same remedy to many other cases. One of his patients had been extremely ill, he said, but was now the father of four or five children! He has been in great demand as a physician, and claims that *Cando* subsequently revealed many remedies to him. Sometimes it is claimed that remedies are made known in dreams. The plant that was first revealed to Chaitan was the *upel lendi* plant, which has a red flower.

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X.

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whatever you wished would have come to pass. You could have wound a string round one of those sticks and then if you had taken the string along with you to a cock fight you would have had good fortune, and the same would apply in hunting. But if you did not behave properly towards it and make offerings to it, it could finish you off and eat you. So that is what it is all about, and now that person will stay around anywhere at all and frighten people. He has become a *bhut*.'"

One of the methods by which it is possible to steal the powers of a dead magician, or rather to capture his "soul force", was explained in the following manner. It is necessary to go to the spot where he was cremated and there draw a picture of the dead man on the ground. If one made offerings to this picture and recited the appropriate spells, he could be brought under control. Some years ago, when a well-known *ojha* in the village of Bankadaha had died, his disciples kept guard over the spot where he had been cremated for some time after his death.

When the Santal *ojha* is called in about a case of sickness or of sudden death, his first function is to try to determine the type to which the particular misfortune belongs. He consults the oracles in order to discover whether natural causes are to blame, in which case it is called plain *rug*, or sickness, or whether it is necessary to lay the responsibility on a witch, a *boiga* or a displeased ancestor. He sits down in the courtyard and waits until two *sarjom* leaves and some mustard oil in a leaf cup are brought to him. Holding one of the leaves in his left hand, he dips his right index finger in the oil and sprinkles some drops on the ground as an offering to the spirits. While doing so he asks for guidance in determining the correct cause of the illness or fatality. He then puts a drop of oil into each of the compartments of the leaf that he is holding, one drop representing one possible agency of evil. There is one for natural causes, three or four for different *boigas*, and other drops represent households in which there may be a witch, including the sick man's house, his father-in-law's house, the houses on the other side of the village street, and so on. When the drops are in position the *ojha* rubs the two leaves together and then holds the first leaf up to the light to discern the shapes that have been taken by the oil. He pronounces the cause of the disease in accordance with the pattern that he sees. If he decides that the *boigas* are displeased, he performs the ceremony known as *bul mayam* in much the same manner as the village co-priest does during the festivals. The blood which he

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755 draws from his arm, chest or thigh is mixed with some sun-dried rice until the whole is saturated. The *ojha* then proceeds to scatter the rice on the ground and prays to the spirits to spare the sick man from further interference. He confirms his diagnosis by oracle by examining the patient and in particular by feeling his pulse, and apart from his power with the spirits [752] he has a stock-in-trade that includes many remedies, spells, and also powers of exorcism. This is resorted to at once in certain cases such as snake bite. The *ojha* squats down beside the sick person and takes in his left hand a peacock feather or sometimes one or two twigs from an old broom, and these he passes along the patient's body without touching it, moving from the head to the feet and chanting the correct spells as he does so.

The magician always warns his clients that there is a possibility of error in his diagnosis, for it is the common belief that witches can interfere with the process of divination in order to draw attention away from themselves. Sometimes at an early stage, but usually when the illness persists in spite of all attempts at a cure, the suspicion of witchcraft arises, and a second divination reveals that a witch is at work. Once the 754 suspicion has been voiced the whole village is concerned in the consultation, and the headman walks through the village ex- [753] claiming in a loud voice near each house: "Beware, for if the sick man does not get well we shall deal with thee!" More *ojhas* are consulted, and once agreement has been reached that witchcraft is operating, then steps have to be taken to locate the witch. The villagers are as a rule reluctant to proceed to this step and only do so when other measures have failed, for no one can tell in advance whether the witch will be found in his own house or not. At times frivolous accusations of witchcraft are made in order to pay off an old grudge, but the 754 fear of the real thing is very strong. The oil divination has to 755 be confirmed by some other means, one of which is the ordeal of placing twigs in water. Some freshly cut twigs are placed in the mud at the water's edge of a pond and vermilion is placed on them. The twigs represent the various households and spirits, as the drops of oil do in the oil and leaf method. The twig that withers first helps to fix the direction in which the villagers must look for the answer to their suspicions. Another method of divination is to place some rice wrapped in a leaf in a white-ant hill; if the ants attack the rice immediately, then witchcraft is involved.